



RABBI MOSHE HAUER ZT"l

**ORTHODOX
UNION**
Enhancing Jewish Life

Rabbi Moshe Hauer's zt"l divrei Torah were enthusiastically read each week by tens of thousands of readers of Torah Tidbits. His sudden death this past *Shemini Atzeret* came as a shock to our community and to the Jewish world at large. In the coming weeks and months we will honor Rabbi Hauer's memory by publishing some of his most compelling and thought-provoking divrei Torah. May the study of his exquisite words of Torah be a source of *chizuk* and bring blessing to his memory.

Finding Our Moral Voice

What do you do when the society in which you live seems to have lost its way? How do you respond when the world seems to have lost its moral compass? Is there anything to do or say when educational institutions cannot tell or teach right from wrong?

Sodom was a terrible place. It was depraved and vulgar and it preached apathy as a value; "What is mine is mine and what is your is yours; that is characteristic of Sodom." That stood in complete opposition to Avraham who was driven to share and give and who dedicated his life to teaching and improving

others. Nevertheless, Avraham the optimist who believed that people could change, that societies and the world could improve, pleaded with God to spare Sodom. Yet even Avraham did not suggest that Sodom be spared unless there were a meaningful number of righteous people *b'toch ha'ir*, in the midst of the city.

The classic commentator Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra (12th century) understood this phrase of "*b'toch ha'ir*" as implying that the presence of good people would only be redeeming if they could live their values publicly, "in the midst of the city." If their virtue would be silenced and driven underground, their presence in the city would have no effect, both because the truth would be buried and because a community that intimidates truth-tellers is irreparable.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch went further, requiring the presence of righteous people who refuse to look on idly at the moral ruin of their fellow citizens. Avraham's righteous man "in the midst of the city" who could save Sodom would be someone who is "in lively connection with his whole environment. He never ceases admonishing and teaching,

לעילוי נשמת

Lionel Friedman z"l

on his 15th *yahrzeit*
15 MarCheshvan

In loving memory

Jonathan Friedman and Family

objecting and warning, rectifying and saving, as much as he is able. He is attentive to everyone and never tires of trying to right things – even if hope for success is slight. He never despairs of man and hastens to undertake any action for the sake of man.”

In the current moment, the truth is struggling to find its place in the midst of this country. It is rarely seen in the media and chased away from academia. Are there fifty truth-tellers *b'toch ha'ir*? Are there ten?

The future of this precious country depends on truth not being driven underground. The future of the world requires that clear voices of truth be raised loudly and clearly to teach and repair, never despairing of man.

We all need to be amongst those voices ringing out *b'toch ha'ir*, for Am Yisrael, for Eretz Yisrael, for America and for the world. ■

והנה שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו Avraham hosted three angels in his tent.

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